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NO. 47

Cuba church celebrates 'first' Christmas

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — In the island nation of Cuba, where the Christmas holiday was officially reinstated by the Communist government after an absence of three decades, two Southwestern Seminary professors have reached some interesting conclusions about this 'first' Cuban Christmas.

Robert Garrett, director of Southwestern's World Missions Center, and professor Steven Stookey spent the week of Dec. 7 teaching at the Baptist seminary in Havana and said despite the challenges it faces, the church in Cuba is growing and maintaining a positive witness.

Part of that witness was celebrating Christmas, not with great physical wealth but in the hearts of the faithful in the church.

"It's a very vibrant church," said Garrett. "There's a newness and freshness about the church."

The growth that Baptists have experienced is reflected in the size of the Havana seminary's student body. With 46 students, the seminary had to turn away approximately two-thirds of its applicants this fall simply because there was not enough room, Garrett said.

He noted that with the restoration of Christmas as an observed holiday, churches could apply for licenses to conduct special ceremonies.

With curiosity in Cuba about

the gospel and spiritual issues, there is great potential for a soul harvest, said Garrett. "People are looking for answers to ultimate questions in Cuba," he said. "There's a tremendous spiritual vitality in

Christmas marks a change from the late 1960s, when the government of Fidel Castro ended the recognition of the holiday.

It was the efforts of missionaries such as Fite that struck a

always had Christmas and we always will whether we have a chicken to cook or not, because Christmas is Christ and we celebrate him in our hearts."

Veguillo also noted that while, publicly, Christmas was just another day, its true meaning would not change even if they had a delicacy such as roast pig.

Stookey agreed with that assessment. He said he was impressed by the fact that despite their dearth of material possessions, the Cuban Christians "have an abundance of spiritual riches."

"They have a deep, deep faith in God, a deep faith in Christ."

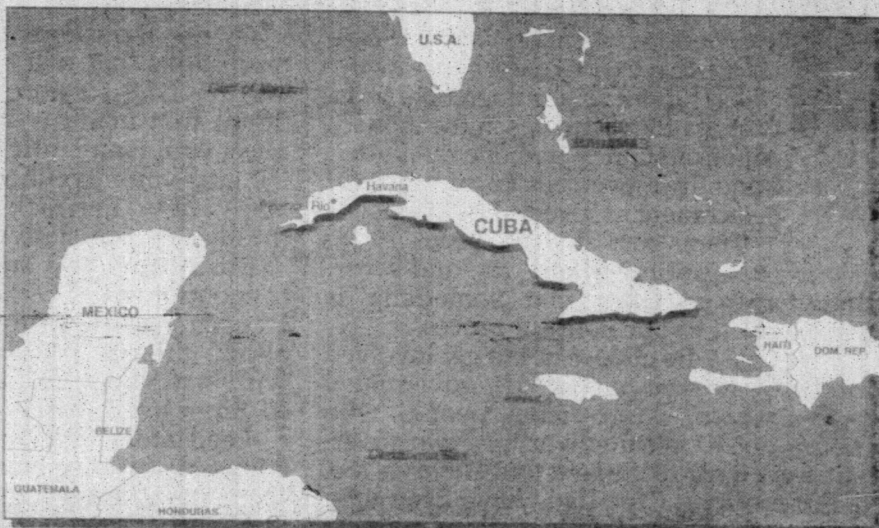
He contrasted it with the celebration of Christmas in the United States, saying the expression of faith displayed by Cuban Christians "is unlike anything I've seen" in this country.

Despite the lack of material possessions, he said, the Cubans are "passionate about their faith in Christ."

That passion was expressed by individuals who shared their testimonies while Stookey was at the Havana seminary, he said.

Stookey recalled listening to individuals telling how their celebration of Christmas had gone on before the official restoration and that it centered around the spiritual meaning, not the commercial overtones it has taken in the U.S.

"I came away terribly impressed with the spirit of the Cuban people," he said. "It was a good reminder for me of the meaning of the season."



believers. If those two factors could unite, there could be a great spiritual revival."

A Southwestern professor who has worked in Cuba as a missionary agrees that the church is growing despite the restrictions on religious activity.

David Fite, who now oversees the Fort Worth seminary's continuing education department, said the reinstatement of the holiday could indicate a more conciliatory stance by the Cuban government to religious activity.

The new celebration of

chord with Cuban Baptists, and Garrett said the faithful he and Stookey encountered there expressed gratitude for their presence.

In addition to teaching at the seminary in Havana, Garrett and Stookey also traveled to the town of Pinar del Rio to attend regional meetings of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention where they heard several church choirs and musical groups as well as sermons and poetry.

What struck Garrett about how Cuban Baptists approach Christmas is that, for them, the celebration of Christ's birth is not made greater or lesser by the presence of material things.

Garrett remembered the seminary's rector, Leoncio Veguillo, as saying, "We have

China archive needs materials

HONG KONG (BP) — The Archive on the History of Christianity in China established two years ago by Hong Kong Baptist University is seeking materials to fill out its collection and increase its usefulness to scholars.

The archive is seeking books, letters, journals, other manuscripts, diaries, photographs, maps, church records, mission records, records of other selected Christian organizations, and any other materials which relate to the history of Christianity in China, said its director, Burton Starr, professor of history at the university.

The archive will receive materials in both Chinese and English, Starr said. While books are needed — especially hard-to-find missionary and pastors' biographies published in limited editions and thus not necessarily expensive but difficult to locate — it would be best to contact the archive first to see if the book is needed so that the expense of postage will not be wasted.

The address is Archive on the History of Christianity in China, Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong; telephone, (852) 2339-5937; fax, (852) 2339-5589; e-mail: Libarc@hkbu.edu.hk.

Hong Kong Baptist University was founded in 1956 with help from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Today, the university has 6,000 full-time students and 35,000 part-time students and is the only accredited Christian university in the Peoples Republic of China.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

'99 Legislature convenes

Secretaries recognized

Lowery Compere dies

Athletes go abroad

Looking back

10 years ago

Southeastern Seminary fails to meet accreditation standards in three of four areas, according to a special study committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The trustees' move to a new conservative majority has resulted in the resignation of the president and seven other administrators.

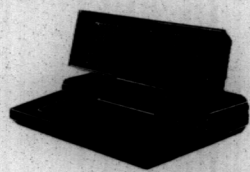
20 years ago

Members of Monticello Church, Monticello, give the largest amount ever to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. Total amount given is \$6,214.64, exceeding the goal of \$5,000 which is double the goal of the previous year. Kenneth Roberts is pastor.

50 years ago

H.H. Ward resigns as missionary for Union County Association to accept the pastorate at Ecru Church, Pontotoc County. The Ecru church voted to go full time with the beginning of the new year. A lot has been purchased and preparations are underway to build a new parsonage.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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The government we deserve

We have become a nation that doesn't care much about politics, the pollsters report. Content with booming economic times, secure from enemy attack, and apparently unmoved by the disgraceful conduct of some of our leaders, the pollsters say we have simply detached ourselves from this most crucial aspect of our civic life and our future.

Syndicated columnist George Will asserts that the American people have turned over governance of the country to a "political class" whose overarching goal is to gain re-election while the important business of the country goes unattended.

The endless stream of cacophonous double-talk pouring from the mouths of many of our political leaders contributes in no small degree to confusion among the electorate.

Couple that with the time demands of church/soccer/music/charities/parents/basketball/work/children/band/illness/cooking/holidays/grandchildren/cleaning/school/family/yard/clubs/fundraisers/conferences and a host of other activities in the modern American family, and one can understand the movement toward political detachment as revealed by the polls.

There just doesn't seem to be enough time in our day, and something has to go. Often, that "something" is involvement in our political process.

A people who choose not to get involved in their governance, get the government they deserve. A Christian people who choose not to get involved in their governance get the government they deserve, too.

For too long Christians have been relegated to the back of the American political parade, as if our input in the political processes of our country really doesn't count. A great deal of the fault for that situation rests with Christians themselves.

Have we bought the idea that religion has no place in the public arena? Are we too intim-

idated by our "post-Christian" culture to assert our right to be involved in the political marketplace of ideas in this country?

Not too many years ago, a White House spokesman commented, "Yes, we've gotten a lot of calls and letters on that issue, but mostly from Christians." That hurts, but maybe we deserve it.

If you're a Christian and you don't like that attitude, it's high time you did something about it. Don't leave it for others to do. Don't detach. Get involved.

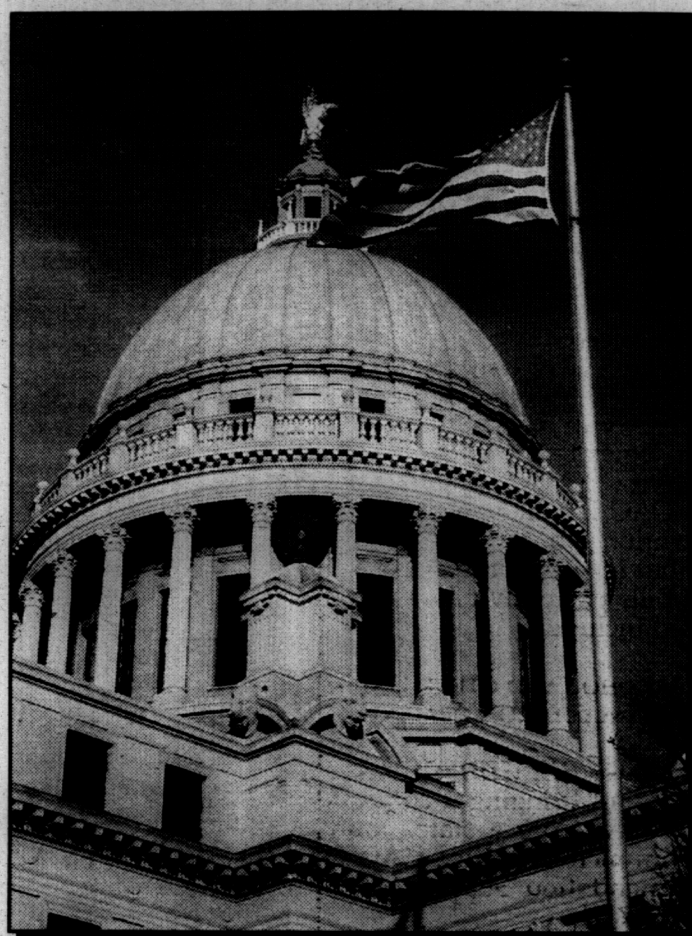
A good place to start is at one of the most basic levels of our governing process — the Mississippi Legislature, which is in session at the present time.

Each of us is represented in the Legislature by a representative and a senator. Do you know who represents you?

Of the thousands of bills and resolutions that will be filed during the 1998 session, there is no doubt that many will personally affect you, your church, your family, and your livelihood. Do you know how to track those bills through the legislative process?

Much time and energy — not to mention taxpayer money — is expended each year on maintaining systems that allow citizens to directly communicate with state lawmakers. Do you know how to get in touch with your legislators?

Legislators welcome input from constituents, so why aren't you talking with them? Be advised that politics is a not genteel sport. It's a rough-and-tumble proposition. You may get your feelings hurt when you're ignored. You could be shouted down by opposition forces. You might get flattened by people who are more organized. You'll probably be offended when doors are slammed in your face.



State Capitol, Jackson

If you want to make a difference, you're just going to have to hang in there. In a state that is overwhelmingly Christian, our voices should count. In a state that is overwhelmingly Southern Baptist, we can make our voices heard. When we don't speak up, other voices fill the vacuum and some are not friendly to our cause.

If we don't get involved, be assured we will get the government we deserve.

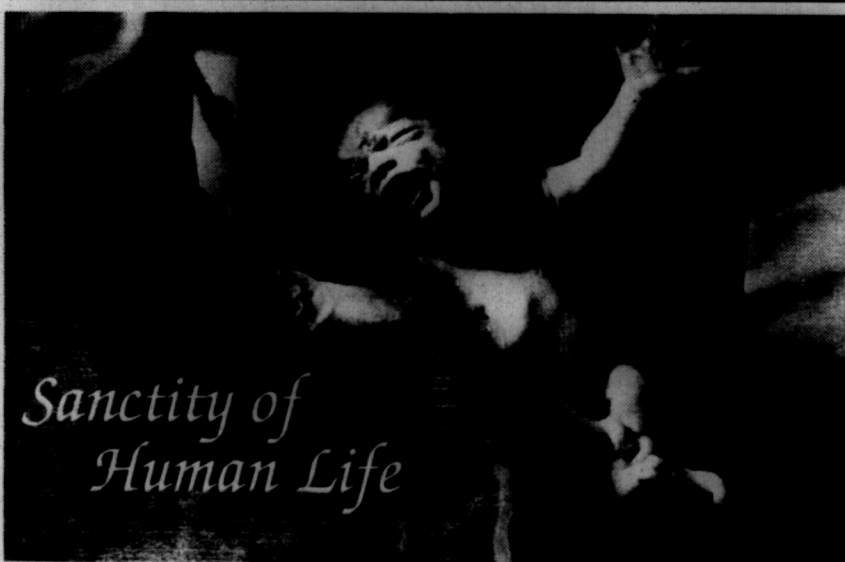
Reprinted by request from the Jan. 29, 1998 issue of *The Baptist Record*.

GUEST OPINION:



The miracle of human life

By Shelia Stanford, consultant
Miss. Baptist Christian Life Comm.



"unhealthy" adults. It will be a world in which human life has become so cheap that homicide is taken casually.

On Sunday, Jan. 17, churches across our nation will join together to study, pray, and act on Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. What can you and your church family do?

◆ Establish a prayer vigil. Pray for our leaders to affirm

the sanctity of human life.

◆ Participate in local events such as the candlelight prayer vigil for the unborn at the State Capitol in Jackson at 6 p.m. on Jan. 22.

◆ Have Sunday School classes teach a lesson on the sanctity of human life on Sunday, Jan. 17.

◆ Respond to women in crisis pregnancies through prayer and support.

Human life is a product of divine design! We see God's creative power and his loving care in each life. Let us affirm the reverence and respect due to human life from conception to the grave. Let us pray and work so that all may come to recognize the sacredness of human life.

When I feel a tiny kick inside my womb, I am reminded once again of the profound creative work which is part of God's perfect plan for his universe. I sing in my heart the words of Mary: "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior!"

Stanford, whose due date is March 15, lives in Clinton with son Drew, age 2, and husband Stan, who serves as Camp Garaywa assistant manager. They attend First Church, Clinton.

Legislature tackles first 500 filed items

By Paul G. Jones, II, Ex. Director
Mississippi Baptist CAC

The 1999 session of the Mississippi Legislature convened on January 5 to consider over 500 bills and resolutions already filed of the more than 3000 bills and resolutions expected to eventually be introduced.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC) will monitor and report on legislation that may be of interest to Mississippi Baptists.

CAC will also recommend a position on most legislation, either in support or opposition.

Bills currently being considered include:

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS INCLUDING TOBACCO

House Bill (HB) 21 makes a felony of bringing a controlled substance into a state, county, or municipal facility. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 128, the Alcohol Boating Safety Act, would make the use of alcohol by those operating boats illegal, and would authorize drawing blood to determine the blood alcohol content of boat operators. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 151 requires drug testing for all elected officials. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 208 requires persons convicted under the implied consent laws to attend an alcohol/drug program. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 297 authorizes drug testing of all juvenile offenders and the treatment and counseling of those determined to be on drugs. CAC recommendation: Support.

Senate Bill (SB) 2062 prohibits smoking in state office buildings. CAC recommendation: Support.

SB 2085 creates the Mississippi Clean Indoor Air Act. CAC recommendation: Support.

SB 2108 prohibits smoking in the New Capitol Building. CAC recommendation: Support.

SB 2261 allows package retailers of alcoholic beverages to sell tobacco products. CAC recommendation: Oppose.

SB 2299 authorizes package retailers of alcoholic beverages to cash checks. CAC recommendation: Oppose.

CHILDREN

HB 200 establishes a statewide curfew for minors under age 18. CAC recommendation: Support.

SB 2047 protects reporters of known or suspected child abuse from retaliatory discharge or other employment action when acting in good faith. CAC recommendation: Support.

SB 2285 makes fondling of one minor by another an act of delinquency. CAC recommendation: Support.

FAMILY

HB 206 mandates an equitable distribution of marital property. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 267 removes maternal presumption in divorce cases. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 325 and **HB 523** provide for covenant marriage and creates the Covenant Marriage Act. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 370 establishes irreconcilable differences as the thirteenth grounds for divorce in Mississippi. CAC recommendation: Oppose.

SB 2221 makes illegal a mother's use of drugs while pregnant and makes it manslaughter if the child dies from the drug use. CAC recommendation: Support.

GAMBLING

HB 241 prohibits the cashing of AFDC or TANF (government assistance) checks at casinos. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 453 prohibits persons under 18 years of age from playing bingo. CAC recommendation: Support.

HB 516 authorizes legal gambling to be discontinued in a county by election. CAC recommendation: Strongly Support.

SB 2276 authorizes universities and colleges to offer courses on gambling. CAC recommendation: Oppose.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

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VOL. 122

No. 47

Persons desiring to contact legislators about specific bills or resolutions may do so by calling the Capitol at (601) 359-3770, or by writing them at P. O. Box 1018, Jackson MS 39215-1018.

CAC can provide additional information on pending legislation and on legislators by district represented, and can be contacted by calling toll-free (800) 748-1651, toll (601) 292-3329, or by FAX at (601) 292-3350.

The CAC mailing address is P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Executive committee officers



New officers for the executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, elected at the committee's Dec. 1998 meeting, include (from left), vice-chairman David Sellers, pastor of Tylertown Church, Tylertown; chairman Frank Harmon, pastor of First Church, Newton; and secretary Sue Dockery, member of Broadmoor Church, Jackson. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

'98 Miss. CP tops goal

Mississippi Baptists gave over a million dollars more than their goal for the 1998 Cooperative Program (CP), according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Miss. Baptist Convention Board.

Total giving in 1998 was a record \$26,789,420. That was \$1,242,812, or 4.86%, more than the budgeted \$25,546,608. December giving was the second largest-ever, \$2,653,429 — \$125,034 more than the \$2,528,395 given in December of 1997.

CP giving for 1997 was \$26,086,167. Giving in 1998 showed an increase of \$703,254, or 2.70%. Every dollar given above the Cooperative Program basic budget goes to Christian education and missions.

International missions gets 25%, or \$310,702. Mississippi missions gets 15%, or \$186,421. North American missions gets 10%, or \$124,281. Christian education gets 50%, or \$621,405. Allocations of the funds to Christian education are disbursed \$106,651, or 17.16% to Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain; \$273,911, or 44.08% to Mississippi College in Clinton; and \$240,843, or 38.76% to William Carey College in Hattiesburg.

"The Cooperative Program is not the only way, but it is a beautiful expression of the hearts of Mississippi Baptists. Truly we can celebrate for the people of the world who will hear about Jesus," Futral said.

SBC CP up by 19%

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for December increased nearly 19% over last year and the fiscal year's first quarter showed an increase of more than \$4 million over last year's first quarter, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

For December 1998, the CP receipts totaled \$12,495,070 compared to December 1997 of \$10,518,445, an increase of \$1,976,625 or 18.79%.

For the SBC's fiscal year first quarter (October through December), CP gifts totaled \$39,964,086, an increase of \$4,399,833 or 12.37%, over the same period last year of \$35,564,253.

Designated gifts for the month of December also showed significant gains: \$3,800,963 compared to last year of \$2,661,053, an increase of \$1,139,909 or 42.84%. For the first quarter, designated gifts totaled \$8,558,859 compared to the same period last year of \$7,707,660, an increase of \$851,199 or 11.04%.

For the SBC's Program Allocation Budget, at the end of the first quarter, the required budget amount of \$38,751,430 was surpassed by \$1,212,655 or 3.13%. For the month of December, CP gifts were \$422,073 short of the required monthly budget figure of \$12,917,143 or 3.27%.

'99 Evangelism Conference set Jan. 18-19

1999 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

JAN. 18-19

CROSSGATES CHURCH, BRANDON

Monday, Jan. 18

Afternoon session, 1:30 p.m.

Prayer	Barry Clingan
Praise/Worship	John Wells
Message	Jarvis Ward
Praise/Worship	John Wells
Message	Thad Hamilton
Praise/Worship	John Wells
Message	Bob Pittman
Benediction	Jerry Mixon

Evening session, 6:30 p.m.

Prayer	Carl White
Praise/Worship	Jim Lott
Drama	Jim McNeil
Witnessing Testimonies	
Praise/Worship	Jim Lott
Special Music	Graham Smith
Message	William Fay

Tuesday, Jan. 19

Morning session, 9 a.m.

Prayer	Bob Sanderson
Praise/Worship	Jim Lott
Drama	Jim McNeil
Praise/Worship	Jim Lott
Revival Preparation	Forrest Sheffield

Afternoon session, 1:30 p.m.

Prayer	David Wills
Praise/Worship	Alan Harris
Special Music	One Voice
Message	P. J. Scott
Praise/Worship	Alan Harris
Message	Bobby Welch
Praise/Worship	Alan Harris
Message	Bob Reccord

Evening session, 6:30 p.m.

Prayer	Robin Nichols
Praise/Worship	Graham Smith
Sp. Music	Singing Churchmen
Message	Jim Futral
Praise/Worship	Graham Smith
Sp. Music	Singing Churchmen
Message	Bob Reccord

Hotels in Brandon Area

Best Western/Pearl
I-20, exit 48
(601) 936-2060

Days Inn/Brandon
I-20, Brandon exit
(601) 825-0894

Days Inn/Pearl
716 E. Hwy 80
(601) 939-8200

Holiday Inn/Pearl
I-20, exit 48
(601) 932-4141

H. Johnson Express
I-20, Airport Rd.
(601) 933-0091

Ramada Limited
I-20, Airport Rd.
(601) 933-1122

Ridgeland Inn
I-20, Crossgates
(601) 824-9977

For more information, contact the Evangelism Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

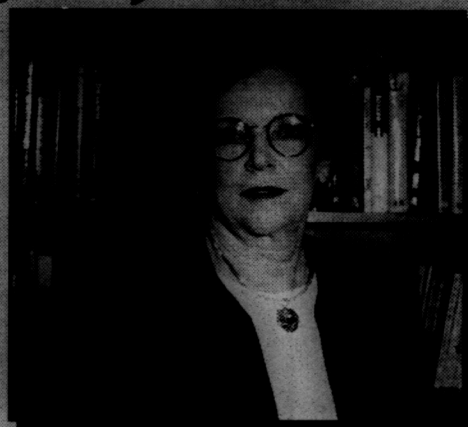
Secretaries recognized for length of service

The Mississippi Baptist Secretaries Association (MBSA) has recognized three church secretaries for their longevity of service. They are Mary Lockhart, who has served First Church, Amory, for 42 years; Carleen McGraw, who has served First Church, Louisville, for 48 years; and Linda Jenkins, who has served First Church, Yazoo City, for 41 years.

Julius Thompson, recently-retired director of the Church Administration/Pastoral Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), presented plaques to all three women at their respective churches.

The next meeting of the MBSA is planned for April 12-13 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. This professional association provides opportunities for fellowship, skills development, and networking with other church secretaries throughout the state.

For more information on MBSA contact the MBCB Church Administration/Pastoral Ministries Department at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



Lockhart



McGraw and Thompson



Thompson and Jenkins

A TRIBUTE

In the first week of 1999, Lowery W. Compere died at almost 93 years of age. His life's companion, Jacqueline, preceded him in death by a year.

Together for a full and rich lifetime, they gave themselves to service in Jesus' name and to ministry among Mississippi Baptists.

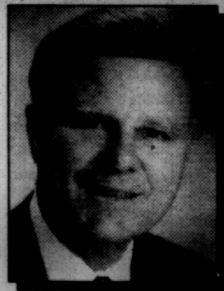
His pastor at First Church, Newton, Frank Harmon, beautifully outlined the three careers of Lowery Compere's life.

He was a pastor for 25 years. He preached to, loved, and led congregations across our state.

He was a president. For 22 years he gave his heart and soul to working with the students and leading Clarke College through some glorious and often demanding times.

He was a presenter. When he retired, he just kept on working, growing, learning, and memorizing. He took up the task that became a ministry of memorizing Scripture.

He memorized the Sermon



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

on the Mount, the Book of Philippians, multiple chapters in the Psalms, long passages in Isaiah, and was memorizing the Gospel of Mark.

In costume and with dramatic interpretation, he would present these beautiful narratives from God's Word. In every occasion, wherever he would make his presentation, he would always request that any honorarium or compensation be directed to some specific mission endeavor.

His life was a living commentary on the Scripture which says, "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with all thy might."

As full as his life was, and even as remarkable as was his

service, his heritage is equally incredible. He was a fourth-generation minister.

His great-grandfather, Lee Compere, came to America from The London Missionary Society as a missionary to native Americans. Arriving in Charleston, S.C., he lived in the home of Richard Thurman, who was pastor of First Baptist Church in Charleston.

As the native Americans were moved westward, Lee Compere and his family moved with them. Along the trail of life, there were children who stayed at different places.

Lowery Compere's grandfather stopped in Mississippi. He,

too, was a preacher and in time became a teacher at Mississippi College in Clinton.

Lowery Compere's father was also a minister who died at a relatively young age from an accident while helping a parishioner build a barn.

Left to grow up in a difficult world, he learned to face life under the guiding hand of a caring Savior.

It is a beautiful picture of the grace of God at work, spanning decades and generations. Now Lowery Compere is truly gathered unto his people.

His life is over, the college he served is no longer open, but to think for a moment that his life, work, and influence for the Lord has ceased would be the height of spiritual ignorance.

God provides for us beautiful insight into these matters when in Rev. 14:13, he says, "Their works do follow them."

We are reminded again of the truth and good and glorious fact that for the Christian, even when life is over, life is not over.

Iraqi seminarian sees Islam as 'repackaged'

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — He's Southwestern Seminary's only student from Iraq, on a physical and spiritual journey that he sees as guided directly by the Lord.

"K. J.," who asked that his name not be used for the safety of his family, was born into a large Muslim family in Baghdad and raised in the Islamic religion. He was the youngest of six boys, and the eighth of 10 children.

K.J. lived in Iraq until 1980, when Iraq began its eight-year war with Iran. K.J.'s father attempted to get passports for his children to leave the country, but Iraqi President Saddam Hussein soon denied permission for Iraqis to get the necessary documentation. Just before that happened, however, K.J. was able to get a passport through the efforts of a neighbor, an act he credits to God's intervention.

From Iraq K.J. first went to Yugoslavia and then to Great Britain where he lived for seven years. He said problems with the Iraqi embassy there, including death threats, compelled him to seek another nation in which to settle, and in 1987 he came to the United States. With \$1,500 in his pocket, he traveled to Tulsa, Okla., to live with his one other brother, who had made it into the United States.

In England, those seeds that had been sown were nurtured as he listened to hymns sung in school and heard Scripture preached. While the message of the Gospel was still difficult for him to accept because of his upbringing, it stayed with him.

Once in Oklahoma, he started visiting churches and asked Allah, the god of Islam, for help. Receiving none, he turned to Jesus Christ. At Southwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, he heard the Gospel in detail.

While intellectually accepting it, he approached God with the same works-oriented viewpoint in which he had been raised, he said. "For six years I was playing church. I was doing Christianity," he said. "I knew nothing about heart commitment."

In October 1995 at a Promise Keepers rally, the issues and fear that had been keeping K.J. from Christ were finally broken down. He had been dealing with such issues as the Trinity and the deity of Jesus, which he says are big obstacles for Muslims. On top of that, he said, Satan was using the fear of embarrassment to stop him from making a commitment.

Nevertheless, K.J. committed his life to Christ and spoke with a pastor about it, who told him "the distance between heaven and hell is 18 inches," the distance between the head and heart.

K.J. is now in the diploma studies program at Southwestern Seminary and

plans to begin work on a master of divinity degree next fall.

Part of his ministry at the Fort Worth seminary is reaching out to Muslims and helping missionaries attempting to reach Muslims.

Concerning the recent strikes by American military forces against targets in Iraq, K.J. said from his perspective they seem ill-timed and likely will carry dubious results.

He said the attacks have saddened and angered Arabs, resulting in their hatred of both President Clinton and the United States. In addition, he said, the four days of strikes have been a stressful time for Iraqis in this country, who, like himself, have been unable to reach their families.

He is serving in a ministry called Good News for the Crescent World, a nonprofit organization started by Southwestern professor Samuel Shahid.

As assistant director, K.J. helps run the organization and assists with seminars for churches aimed at raising awareness about Islam, which he noted is the fastest-growing religion in the United States. Approximately 100,000 Muslims live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, 700,000 live in

Texas, and some 6-9 million live in the United States, he said.

"Christians need to be aware of the dangers of Islam," K.J. said, adding the Muslim religion denies the divinity of Jesus Christ and relegates him to the role of a prophet — but the large numbers of Muslims in this country present opportunities for Christians to witness freely to them without fear of governmental interference.

As part of that effort, the Crescent World organization has set up an Internet site designed to answer questions Muslims might have about the deity of Christ, the Trinity and other Christian doctrines.

"It's a direct tool to share the Gospel with Muslims," said K.J.

That site can be found at www.gnfcw.org.

The organization's goal of raising awareness in churches to the inroads made by Islam is especially urgent, K.J. said, because many churches are not ready to meet the challenge. Islam has changed its image from that it presented in years past, he added.

It has been "repackaged" to look more palatable to the West.

The goal is to convert the West, including the U.S., to Islam. "They are working under the deceitful veil of cooperation with other religions," K.J. said.

To fight that, churches and Christians need to be trained to witness to Muslims and to demonstrate



through their lives the love of Christ. Actions speak louder than words, said K.J., and by being helpful to Muslim — by being a friend — a Christian can show them the way to peace that only Jesus offers.

Minister likens dictator Hussein to Hitler

DETROIT (BP) — Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has referred to Americans as "agents of Satan," but an Egyptian-American Southern Baptist minister who conducts Bible studies for Detroit-area Iraqis disagrees, saying it is Saddam who is like Adolf Hitler.

"Saddam is building nuclear weapons, trying to make himself a source of horror in the area," says Wajih Girgis, 50, pastor of the 52-member Arabic Baptist Church and the 22-member Arabic Baptist Mission in Garden City, Mich. "He should be removed from office. He is like Hitler."

Girgis says about a dozen Iraqi Christians, some from as far as 40 miles away, come to Garden City to attend his Saturday Bible studies. The Detroit area, and particularly the auto manufacturing Mecca of Dearborn, has the largest concentration of Arab-Americans.

Lured by jobs in the auto factories, they began immigrating to the region in the 1920s. Further waves of immigrants have been attracted by hundreds of businesses in the city sporting Arabic signs and Arabic-speaking staffs.

Girgis says more than 100,000 Iraqis live in the area, many of whom fled southern Iraq after Saddam suppressed a rebellion at the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

"They hate Saddam," Girgis said of his Iraqi brothers. "Air attacks hurt the Iraqi people and many here in the U.S. have families over there. They are afraid to say anything. The people cannot speak out because they are controlled by the leadership. If anybody speaks out they are killed."

Girgis said that a consensus still exists among Arab-Americans on many issues, including the removal of Saddam from office. Yet there is general agreement too that economic sanctions are ineffective and cause excessive hardship for the Iraqi people.

The U.N. trade embargo against Iraq appears to be crumbling as a result of Clinton's most recent air raids. Russian and Chinese leaders are miffed because they were not consulted

before UNSCOM — the UN inspectors charged with identifying Saddam's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons — were recalled to make way for the air attacks.

As a result, UN Security Council members Russia, China, and France may well lift economic sanctions against Iraq, handing Saddam yet another victory.

"I believe that the U.S. was right," Girgis said, referring to four days of air and missile strikes against Iraq. Clinton eventually called off the attacks, ending the military action dubbed Desert Fox.

Clinton ordered the attacks to cease so as not to interfere with the beginning of Ramadan, a holy month in the Islamic world. Clinton, in his Saturday radio address, declared the "most profound admiration for Islam."

U.S. and British warplanes and Tomahawk cruise missiles hit nearly 300 military and infrastructure targets during the attacks. Reports indicated at least 68 Iraqis were killed and 96 wounded in the strikes, which represented the most severe firepower used since the 1991 Gulf War.

"In every nation you have good and bad people, but normally the Iraqi people are good people, not like Saddam," said the 50-year-old Girgis. "They are peaceful and religious people, but the people are suffering and many are dying from hunger and a lack of medicine."

Girgis said many Iraqi immigrants in the Detroit area remain Muslim, while the ones who are Christians are mostly Catholic.

"At our Bible study we try to offer encouragement and comfort to them, reassuring them that God is in control," said Girgis, who was saved 20 years ago and became an ordained Southern Baptist minister 17 years ago.

"We tell them that God allows things like this to happen in order that something good will come," Girgis added before citing Rom. 8:28.

"I believe God is in control and will bring something good of this. We need your prayers."

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Central Church of McNeill (Pearl River Association) recently held a special dedication/celebration service honoring the debt-free completion of its new pastorium. Pictured are Raymond Jeffcoat, pastor, wife Drewe Llyn, and children Candace, Kyle, and Cassie.

New Sight Church, Brookhaven, will celebrate its 75th anniversary on Jan. 16 and 17. This celebration will begin with an Open House and reception at 4 p.m. on Saturday followed by a 7 p.m. worship service. Guest speakers are Talmadge Smith and John Smith. Activities will continue on Sunday with Sunday School at 10 a.m., Edgar L. Wright, former pastor, will be preaching at the 10:45 a.m. worship service, followed by a pot-lunch luncheon. Johnny Sykes is pastor.

Hardy Church, Grenada, has awarded scholarships to 30 deserving students pursuing an education toward Christian service since the program began in 1977. Two scholarships in the amount of \$600 each have been awarded to Apryl M. Fant of William Carey College and Harold K. Russell of Blue Mountain College. The fund continues to grow by the taking of an annual "special offering" in November, memorials, and honorariums. Michael McLendon is pastor. For more information, contact Hardy Church, 750 Hardy Road, Grenada, MS 38901.

Trace Ridge Church, Ridgeland, will dedicate its new Allen Master Design Series organ on Jan. 17. Special guest will be Becky Parker Lombard, assistant professor of music theory and organ at New Orleans Seminary. Lombard will play for the 10:30 a.m. worship service and will give a dedicatory concert at 3 p.m. Ed McDaniel is pastor, Michael Allen is minister of music, and Elaine Bishop is organist. For more information call (601) 856-2529.

Baptist Health Systems, Inc. (BHS) broke ground recently on its Northeast Medical Complex on Old Canton Road in northeast Jackson. The 22,400

square-foot facility, which is to include relocation of the Northtown primary care clinic, as well as a senior clinic, an adult day care center, rehabilitation services, and educational space, is scheduled to open in Summer 1999. Breaking ground (from left) are Al McKinney of Centex Concord, primary contractor; Larry Collins, Northtown Clinic; Gerald Cotton, BHS executive vice president; Howard McMillan, chairman of the BHS Board of Trustees; Rose Snow, BHS vice president; Jackson Mayor Harvey Johnson Jr.; James Street, BHS board of directors; Richard Dean, Dean & Dean Architects; and Ben Allen, Jackson ward 1 councilman.



Hillcrest Church, Jackson, recently held a recognition service for its RAs. Receiving badges (pictured) are Jacob Clack, Jared Hooper, Brandon Freeman, Will Dorman, Joey Clack, Jay Taylor, and Jonathan Reves. Leaders are John and Barbara Reves, Rocky Clack, Fields Bacon, and Gary Holden.

Compere dies in Newton

Funeral services for William Lowrey Compere Sr., were held on Jan. 8 at First Church in Newton. Compere, 92, a native of Smith County, died Jan. 4 at Newton Regional Hospital.

Compere led Clarke College in Newton from 1955 until his retirement in 1977. He was a pastor the previous 25 years, having served churches in Jackson, Greenville, Meridian, Belzoni, Ellisville, Taylorsville, and Summerland. Compere was a graduate of Mississippi College and Peabody University where he received his master's degree. He also did graduate work at New Orleans Seminary.

Survivors include a daughter, Jackie Boyd of Burleson, Texas; sons, Bill Compere Jr. of Burleson, and John Senter

Compere of Astoria, Ore.; sister, Mabel Clare Hardin of Calhoun City; brothers, Broadus S. Compere of Jackson and R. Searcy Compere of Brandon; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. His wife Jacqueline Senter Compere preceded him in death.

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COMPLETE SIGHTSEEING.

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ALASKA WONDERS

May 31 - June • 7 night INSIDE PASSAGE CRUISE, Indian Village, Anchorage & more
\$1999 - Phone Quick!

ALASKA - LAST FRONTIER

July 4-16 • 13 days include CRUISE, Alaska Hwy, Valdez, Mt. McKinley, Juneau • \$2598

GRAND ALASKA

Aug. 21- Sept. 1 • WILDERNESS TRAIN & 8 day GLACIER/INSIDE PASSAGE CRUISE included • \$2499 - Will fill soon!

HAWAII BREEZES

June 16-23 • MAUI & OAHU with great sightseeing • \$1399 bargain

CHERRY BLOSSOMS WASHINGTON

April 5-11 • Penn Dutch Country, Gettysburg & Monticello also featured • \$639 complete

SPRING FIESTA SAN ANTONIO

April 19-23 • RiverWalk, Alamo & more plus German Country, Galveston • \$462 super value

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TULIP TIME HOLLAND, MICH.

May 10-15 • America's Dutch Capitol, Indiana AMISH Country, Mr. Lincoln's Hometown • \$535 inclusive

TRANS-CANADA BY TRAIN

May 26-June 5 with Jim and Joy Yates, Yazoo City • TORONTO, WINNIPEG, EDMONTON, ROCKIES, VANCOUVER • \$1799 includes air

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

June 1-6 • Longfellow's Wayside Inn, Cape Cod Cruise, Mystic Seaport, SHOWS in New York • \$1249 includes air

CALIFORNIA 49er STATE

June 17-25 • San Diego, Giant Redwoods, Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, Reno & more • \$1249 with many extras

PACIFIC NORTHWEST & CANADIAN ROCKIES

July 6-18 • BANFF, LAKE LOUISE, Mt. Shasta, Oregon, Glacier Park, and more • \$1499 complete

COLORADO ROCKIES

July 31- August 8 • Air Force Academy, Rocky Mtn. Park, MT. RUSHMORE, Passion Play, Yellowstone • \$1248

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1424 Old Square Rd. - Box 13913, Jackson, MS 39236-3913

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 14, 1999

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Office of Communication**.



Christian Performing Arts Festival

with Church Recreation and Youth Leader Conferences

March 26-27, 1999
Morrison Heights Baptist Church
Clinton • Cost \$20

For more information, contact
Discipleship & Family Ministry Department
(601)968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

State Single Adult Weekend

February 12-13
Tupelo



with **Harold Ivan Smith**, author

12th:	7:00 p.m.	Dinner at Executive Inn
	10:00 p.m.	Concert with Sweeter Rain (Ark.)
13th:	8:00 a.m.	Barns Crossing Mall Buffet Breakfast Executive Inn around indoor pool
	10:00 a.m.	Conference on "Single and Free" and "Starting Over," with four sub-topics
	12:30 p.m.	Other opportunities of sight-seeing
Cost:	\$15	Registration/Breakfast/Concert (Optional) Dinner
	\$13	

Checks payable to Lee County Baptist Assoc. and sent to Rev. Mike Hatfield, 208 Lake Street, Tupelo, MS 38801 (Call 601-842-4947).

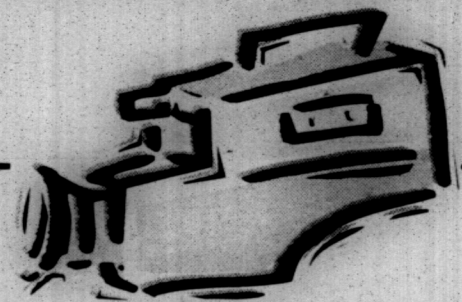
Teams Needed for UKRAINE PROJECTS



The following teams have been requested for volunteers to go to Ukraine. Please note your interest and respond to the address below:

1. **Construction Project - July 1-14, Odessa.** To build classroom building to be used by Odessa Seminary and 2nd Baptist Church. Can use several teams. Each team will need \$5,000 for building supplies.
2. **Evangelism/Church starts - August 5-18, Balta.** Several teams are needed to help begin churches by using various methods of evangelism.
3. **Evangelism/Church starts - September 2-15, Kotovsk.** Several teams are needed to conduct evangelistic service and do personal witnessing.
4. **Medical/Evangelism team to Odessa - October 7-20.** Contact person: Mackie Davis at 601-264-4815.
5. **Evangelism/Church Starts - September 16-29, Odessa.** Several teams are needed for evangelism, street preaching. Personal witnessing and other methods of evangelism.
6. **Children and youth ministry - July 17-28, Odessa.** Team will conduct VBS and other activities to reach children for Bible studies and activities. Team leader: Donna Swarts 601-849-6153.
7. **Children's Camps - July and August, Odessa.** Teams of four needed to direct camp activities along with Ukrainians. One hundred campers each week for four weeks. Maximum teamsize is 10. Total cost will be \$1,695 which includes airfare, food, lodging, insurance; and transportation in the country.

Call the Partnership Missions Office at 800-748-1651 in state or 601-968-3800, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205 for more information.



Witnessing Through Media Awards

Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting organization the 1999 Witnessing Through Media Awards program has been created to recognize radio and video productions which demonstrate excellence in message design and production in helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. If your church is involved in a radio or video production in the following time frame (March 1, 1998 - March 1, 1999), why not think of entering this year's awards program. We have had some creative work done by Mississippi churches in the past and I know this year will be no exception, says Farrell Blankenship, director, Department of Broadcast Services. Contact his office for an entry form or additional information. Entry deadline is March 1, 1999.

CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATORS ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Steven Lewis
Oklahoma City
Attorney
Church Law Leader

February 11, 1999

BROADMOOR BAPTIST CHURCH

787 East Northside Drive
Jackson



Bruce Sides
Dallas
Region 3 Director
Annuity Board

Church Business Administrators Conference - Registration Form

February 11, 1999

Broadmoor Baptist Church

Cost: \$10 (includes materials and lunch at the church)

Name _____ Church _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip _____

Association _____ Position _____

Telephone No. _____ \$10 Registration Fee included: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Clip and return to:

Matt Buckles, CAPM Dept., P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

For further information, contact: Matt Buckles, 800-748-1651 (in Jackson, 968-3800);
or Larry Garner, Metro Baptist Association, 362-8676.



VBS Early Bird Clinic

February 9, 1999

Baptist Building Sky Room, Jackson

9 a.m.-noon

For a Mountain-Top Experience in VBS Get Mt. Extreme!

The VBS Summit Sampler and Curriculum will
be on display and available for purchase.

Calling all pastors, VBS directors,
and interested VBS leaders

to explore an overview of the new 1999 theme.

1999

Mississippi Baptist State Handbell Festivals



APRIL 16-17

GULF SHORE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY

Clinician

Valerie Stephenson

Music Educator/Composer

New Orleans

Deadline for registration is April 9

APRIL 23-24

**HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE FORUM
GRENADA**

Clinician

Christine Anderson

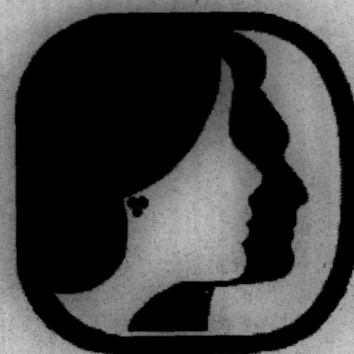
Solo Handbell Artist

Castaic, Calif.

Deadline for registration is April 16



Contact the Church Music Department for more information
at 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.



PARENTING TEENAGERS IN 2000

Friday, February 19, 7-9 p.m.

Saturday, February 20, 8 a.m. - noon

Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Jackson

John Trent, Speaker

Trent will help equip parents for the challenge of building healthy, positive relationships with teenagers. Gifted with the ability to bring joy to your heart and a smile to your face, Trent will share an insightful blend of biblical truth and workable wisdom in a language anyone can understand and apply.

Trent is currently president of ENCOURAGING WORDS, a ministry dedicated to strengthening relationships, especially those related to the family. He is the author or co-author of numerous books, including The Blessing, The Two Sides of Love, and Life Mapping. Previously, Trent was associated with Gary Smalley's ministry, Today's Family. Trent is a frequent guest of Focus on the Family and 700 Club Radio and Television programs.

For more info, contact Don Lum, Tammy Anderson, or Mark Lott at 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.



YOUTH BIBLE STUDY FORUM

Saturday, March 6, 1999

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada

8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

**What are your youth saying about Sunday School?
We want to hear from them!**

Bring FOUR of your youth to this unique Forum and give them an opportunity to share. We hope you will bring a mixture of older youth and younger youth, and a mixture of male and female. Also, consider including two active youth and two who are only "fringely" active. The reason for only four from each church has to do with our desired purpose. We want to generate meaningful, honest, open and "serious" discussion. The smaller the number, we feel, the easier this will be to accomplish.

There is no charge to participate in this Forum. However, we do ask that you pre-register with the Sunday School Department. Call Mark Lott to get more information (1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800, ext. 295).



People Reach Expo

February 27, 1999

9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Jim Buck Ross Agriculture & Forestry Museum, Jackson

Purpose

To motivate and provide churches and church leaders with practical ideas on how to reach their community.

Audience

Key Church Leadership

There will also be booths sponsored by churches highlighting the methods they use to reach people.

For more information, contact
Sunday School Department
(601)968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

The preschool/children's team will provide resources, events, and training to help
Tell Mississippi Children They Are Precious in Jesus' Sight.

TELL MISSISSIPPI'S CHILDREN



THEY ARE PRECIOUS IN JESUS' SIGHT

1. Resources will be available for associations to conduct a **1999 Associational TeamKid Rally**.
2. Resources will be mailed to each church in the February Light Packet to help churches conduct a **1999 Children's Day**.
3. Older Children's Retreat information was mailed in the December Light Packet. **Older Children's Retreat**, July 22-24, 1999, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian, Miss. Registration opens March 1.
4. **Preschool/Children's Ministers Retreat** is scheduled for April 29-30, 1999, Patterson Lodge, Camp Garaywa, Clinton.

Connecting with the Future Conference

Saturday, February 13, 1999, 8:30 a.m.- noon, FBC Madison

Introducing new focus age groups in preschool curriculum.

New focus age groups are designed to meet the needs, avenues of learning and characteristics of today's preschoolers.

Conferences offered: Professionals/Division Directors, Babies, Ones-Twos, Threes-Pre-K, Kindergarten, Sunday School Preschool Curriculum.

Contact the Sunday School Dept. for more info: 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

A Study of Proverbs



Older Children's Retreat July 22-24
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly Pass Christian, Miss.

On this retreat we're going to learn:

Proverbs was written to help make us wise, not just so we'll be smart and know a lot, but so we'll know how to live and how to make right choices...choices that please God and help us get along with others.

This retreat is for those children who have completed grades 4-6.

Cost: \$76 Registration opens March 1, 1999.

Plan now to go to the Older Children's Retreat '99.

For registration information, please contact Gulfshore Baptist Assembly at 228-452-161. For program information, call the Sunday School Department at 1-800-748-1651.

Reverence and respect for God is the beginning of wisdom.

Growth Spiral Conference

Tuesday, February 16, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Chapel, Baptist Building, Jackson, \$5 cost

Growth Spiral is a tool to enable a church to experience growth through a dynamic, balanced Sunday School ministry. It is a systematic plan of goal setting and evaluation for your church. This conference will assist you in planning for the necessary elements of Sunday School growth such as:

- Enrollment • Attendance • Prospects
- Teaching Units • Ministry Touches • Space
- Workers • Training • SS Leadership Meetings
- Worship Attendance • Offerings • Baptisms

Contact the Sunday School Dept. for more info: 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

Pray this day for...

January 15 - 28, 1999

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

What is Prayer? Prayer is fundamentally a relationship with God. Prayer is the ministry of all ministries; without it, we eliminate God's chosen method of work.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday (Christian Action Commission and S S Emphasis). The Waray-Waray people in the Philippines are receptive to the gospel and a high priority for church planters. Pray for the five million Waray-Waray living on the third-largest Philippine island of Samar, Leyte, and on many small surrounding islands.

Baptist Men's Day (Brotherhood Emphasis). At the Wallace Memorial Baptist Hospital in Pusan, South Korea, missionary Jim Swihart leads Bible studies among the employees. In one group are several pharmacists who are not Christians. Pray for these young professionals to be bold in claiming Christ for their own lives.

For Area Vocal, Conducting, Instrumental Festival; North Oxford BC, Oxford, sponsored by Church Music Dept. For Bivocational Ministers/Wives Fellowship, Sonny's BBQ, Brandon, sponsored by Church Administration Pastoral Ministries. For the State Evangelism Conference, Crossgates BC, Brandon, sponsored by Evan. Dept.

For Area Vocal, Conducting, Instrumental Festival, Baptist Building/Highland BC, Meridian, sponsored by Church Music Dept. Pray for a dynamic church-planting movement, culturally relevant and Biblically-based, to develop among the Oueme people of Benin.

Jean "Serge" Cassamajor, Smyrna, GA, is a Messenger of the Word pastoring Green Acres Baptist Mission. Pray that the congregation will be more stable. Too many people attend for a while and then move away.

About 1,800 Hokkien people live on the small island of Chiau-si, Taiwan, where there are no churches and no regular Christian witness. Recently a small team of missionaries and Taiwanese believers ministered on that island. Thank God that three men made prof. of faith. Pray that God will raise up someone to minister on Chiau-si on a regular basis.

Baptist representatives Wayne and Pam Jenkins, who serve in Cham, Germany ask us to pray for a family who have indicated a desired to start a new Bible study in the town of Waldmuenchen on the Czech border. Pray for plans to start cell groups in all the major cities of the country in which Cham is located (130,000 people!).

Pray as plans are being made to develop a "Youth at Risk" outreach program in Nogales and El Melon. The local government in these communities in central Chile has asked Baptists to help develop a program to reach young people who are marginalized from society and who are at high risk of developing anti-social behavior.

A missionary writes: "Please join us in prayer for Angola! Unrest is growing, and the people are suffering. Two United Nations planes have been shot down recently due to the acceleration in the war. So we plead with you to join us in prayer."

For Area Keyboard Festivals, Calvary BC, Tupelo/Fairview BC, Columbus/Morrison Hgts BC, Clinton/FBC, Natchez/FBC, Hattiesburg/FBC, Laurel, sponsored by Church Music Department. For Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association, Meridian, sponsored by Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association.

For the Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra Retreat; Pearl High School, sponsored by Church Music. For Train the Trainer, Crossgates BC, Brandon, sponsored by Sunday School Dept.

For Campus Day; William Carey College, sponsored by WMU. A prayerwalk team is scheduled to go to Chengdu, China, on March 1. Pray that airplane tickets will be available and that the prayerwalk team will lead many to believe.

During the past few months in Indonesia, a number of churches and some mosques have been damaged or destroyed. Unemployment is high, and food is expensive and scarce. Pray for a movement of GOD among the people and for provision of necessities for daily life.

For Area Vocal, Conducting, instrumental Festival; Petal-Harvey BC, Petal, sponsored by Church Music Dept. Lee Dawson, Greenville, NC is a church planter apprentice with New Beginnings Bible Studies. Pray that additional homes will be open for Bible studies. Pray that more families will become involved.

MARCH

6-91 MISS HANNA WEBB
Azcuena 2973100, Parana E.R., ARGENTINA
Parents: Elvin and Janet, General Evangelism

8-82 MR. DAVID SONG
431 Tee Street, Biloxi, MS 39532
Parents: Woong Ho & Sook Ja, Field Personnel Assistance

15-97 MISS ABIGAIL HEWITT
Baptist Medical Centre, Box 50, Nalerigu, via Gambaga, GHANA
Parents: Earl & Ramona

16-93 MR. DAVID A. VAUGHN
Caixa Postal 625, 95.001-970 Caxias do Sul, RS, BRAZIL
Parents: John & Kathy, General Evangelism

24-89 MISS ROBYN L. KYZAR
c/o UECB Russia, International Post Office, P O Box 171
Moscos 101000 RUSSIA
Parents: Russell & Melinda, Strategy Coordinator

26-79 MR. DERON K. MEILSTRUP
Mississippi College, P O Box 4943, Clinton, MS 39058
Parents: Dennis & Sherrie, Music Promotion
SERVE IN ARGENTINA

27-88 MISS ALLISON L. MARTIN
Casilla de Correo 637, 5500 Mendoza, ARGENTINA
Parents: Ashbury & Hope, General Evangelism

29-97 MR. JASON BROWN
P O Box 30018, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, MALAWI
Parents: John & Claudia, General Evangelism



"Changing Communities" WMU '99 Habitat Project

Meeting physical and spiritual needs

Woman's Missionary Union is teaming up with Habitat for Humanity in what promises to be a challenging and rewarding missions opportunity and

W E N E E D Y O U R H E L P !

Mississippi's WMU will be building two homes in inner-city Jackson and ministering to surrounding neighborhoods during the week of July 11-17, 1999.

Yes, I want to help make a difference in the lives of others.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Daytime phone _____

___ I'd like to volunteer. Please send information about serving in the following ministry areas: _____

___ My women's group would like to volunteer. Please send information about serving in the following ministry areas: _____

___ I'd like to help financially. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____
(Deadlines for donations: April 1, 1999. Please make check payable to: WMU Habitat Project. All donations are tax-deductible.)

Mail to: WMU Habitat House: Woman's Missionary Union
P O Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

PLEASE RETURN BY APRIL 1, 1999

Ministry Opportunities Include:

- Revival Ministry
- Backyard Bible Clubs
- Door to Door Visitation
- Sports Ministry
- Medical Ministry
- Legal Ministry

HOUSE TOPS

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College (WCC) and Mississippi Women's College (MWC), will celebrate Homecoming on Jan. 29 and 30. Mississippi Women's College was renamed William Carey College in 1954. Friday activities include MWC registration, 10:30 a.m.; MWC luncheon, 12 noon; and special events include presentation of the MWC Distinguished Alumna award and special recognition of the members of the class of 1949. Saturday, the Winters School of Music alumni will meet at 8 a.m. and science related alumni meet at 8:30 a.m. An Awards

Luncheon will be held at 12:30 p.m. Class reunions will be held on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. For ticket reservations and further information, contact the alumni office at (601) 582-6107, or (800) 962-5991 ext. 107.

The William Carey College Speech and Debate Team (Forensics) placed first overall at the Louisiana State University-Shreveport Forensics competition held recently. The Crusader team also placed first in individual events and debates sweepstakes. Receiving awards were Chris Smith, Petal; Brian Lucas,

Petal; Mandy Trammell, Florence; Ron Durbin, Laurel; Danny Panter, Florence; and Nakia Whitehead, Picayune.

Mississippi College (MC) Forensics and Debate Team won five victories at the University of Texas "Patriot Games" Speech and Debate Tournament in Tyler, Texas. The MC team competed against 36 other schools. Brett Harvey, a sophomore, garnered three awards. Sonya Dickens, a junior, was a semi-finalist in extemporaneous speaking. Harvey and Dickens teamed up to win second place in

Parliamentary Debate. Web Drake is director of forensics and a communication instructor.

Mississippi Symphony Chamber Orchestra will present its second concert of the Mississippi College Chamber Series, Jan. 15. The Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Colman Pearce, music director/principal conductor, will perform at 7:30 p.m. in Swor Auditorium. Tickets (\$10, adults; \$5, MC students) will be available at the door, or may be purchased in advance by calling the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra office at (601) 960-1565.

Mississippians graduate from New Orleans Seminary

Three students with Mississippi connections received doctoral degrees from New Orleans Seminary (NOBS) during commencement exercises on Dec. 18. Pictured (from left) are Rick Henson of Meridian, doctoral of ministry; Chuck Kelley, president of NOBS;

Richard Johnson, pastor of First Church, Bay St. Louis, doctor of philosophy with a major in New Testament; and Ken Sterling of Magnolia, doctor of education.

Receiving master of divinity degrees were Michael R. McLendon of Hattiesburg, pastor of Hardy Church, Grenada; Merrill Keith Bonner, who recently served as pastor of Hathorn Church, Columbia; Billy Ray Little of Columbus, pastor of Robinson Church, Liberty; David Owen Morris of Jackson, John Douglas Jones, minister to students at First Church, Vancleave; William Thomas Boren of Meridian; James P. Williford, pastor of First Church, Oloh; Keith M. Thompson of Petal, pastor of New Hope Church, Sumrall; Kenneth "Todd" Stewart of Gillsburg, pastor of Georgetown Church, Georgetown; and Mary Strickland Herrington of Columbia.

Bennie C. Caston Jr., of Liberty, minister of music and senior adults at Roseland Church, Picayune, received the master of church music degree.

Ronald P. "Sam" Johnson Jr. of Pascagoula, pastor of Woodhaven Church, Ocean Springs, received the associate in pastoral ministries degree.

Phillip Oliver Burns of Brandon received the bachelor of general studies degree.

Receiving the women's ministry certificate were Lynda Watts of Biloxi and Kay B. Martin of Ridgeland, women's ministry worker and Bible study teacher at Ridgecrest Church, Madison.



Henson, Kelley, Johnson, and Sterling

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Cason Church, Nettleton, recently ordained Tony Summerford, Donnie Sloan, and Tim Laney as deacons. Pictured (from left) are Summerford, Sloan, and Laney. Wayne Brown is pastor.

evangelism in 1999. For the past 12 years, he has served as a civilian chaplain at the Naval Air Station in Meridian. He is a member of Southside Church, Meridian. Barker can be contacted at 130 Skyland Drive, Meridian, MS 39301 or (601) 483-9627.

Bob Barker Jr. plans to enter



Deacons of Cason Church, Nettleton

STAFF CHANGES

Reggie L. Bridges was called by Canaan Church, Ashland, as pastor effective Dec. 13. He was ordained at Birmingham Ridge Church, Saltillo, his home church, on Jan. 10. Bobby Holland is pastor.

Southside Church, Vicksburg, has recently called George Gregory Clemts as pastor. Clemts attended the University of Southern

Mississippi and New Orleans Seminary. He goes to Southside Church from Calvary Church, Belzoni, and previously was pastor at Morgan Chapel Church and First Church, New Augusta.



Clemts

Revival dates

East Louisville, Louisville: Jan. 17-20; Keith Powell of Baton Rouge, La., evangelist; Steve and Becky Carver, music.

Easthaven, Brookhaven: Jan. 17-20; Mike Alexander, evangelist; Bendon, Ginn, pastor.



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Thad Hamilton, Georgia Baptist Convention
Jim McNeil, dramatist
Bob Pittman, pastor, Kirby Woods Baptist Church, Memphis
Forrest Sheffield, pastor, Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo
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Human cloning report prompts call for ban

WASHINGTON (BP) — A report that South Korean researchers have cloned a human embryo demonstrates why an international ban on the practice is needed, a Southern Baptist bioethics specialist said.

The infertility specialists, working at Kyunghee University Hospital in Seoul, cloned an embryo that was a replica of a 30-year-old woman, researchers announced Dec. 16.

Lee Bo-yon, one of the scientists, said, "... we can assume that a human child would be formed" if implanted in a woman. The Washington Post reported. The scientists did not take the step of transferring the embryo to a woman because of legal and ethical questions, instead destroying the embryo after it had divided into four cells, according to news reports.

While some scientists questioned the validity of the researchers' contention they had cloned a truly viable embryo, specialists in the field said the drive to clone human beings will continue.

Ben Mitchell, a Southern Baptist bioethicist, said the report shows a need for a "multinational coalition to address human cloning immediately."

"Even if in the end we find that the Koreans were not successful in cloning a

human embryo, that reality is not far off," said Mitchell, consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and an associate professor of Christian ethics at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. "Someone is going to do it, unless we act swiftly and decisively."

"Sadly, the only way to prevent human cloning from taking place is to attach huge penalties to it. Public censure is a start, but it is not enough."

"In our world, money talks. Once an international ban on human cloning is in place, labs and research facilities that persist in experimenting with human cloning should be shut down and fined. I see no other way of dealing with this dilemma."

The South Korean researchers acted irresponsibly, Mitchell said. "First, they created an embryo with the purpose of destroying it," he said. "Second, there were, as far as we know, no ethical review protocols in place. Any experimentation on human subjects ought to be accompanied by a thorough review process. Were this the case, this research would not have been approved."

Recently, England's human genetics commission and the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority jointly recommended the cloning of human embryos to grow tissue but did not support the transfer of cloned embryos to the womb,

according to The Post. France is contemplating revising its guidelines in similar fashion next year, The Post reported.

In the United States, federal funds may not be used for human cloning, but privately funded research is not illegal.

After the announcement of the cloning of the first mammal in early 1997, President Clinton issued an executive order prohibiting the use of federal funds for human cloning and calling for a voluntary moratorium on private research.

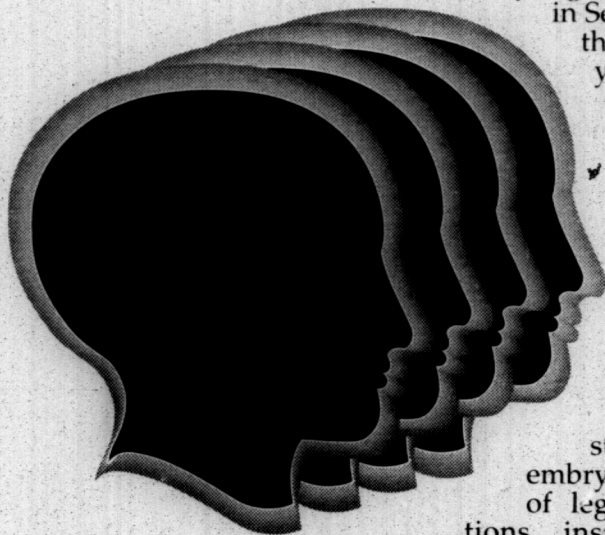
The president called for a five-year ban on human cloning on recommendation from the National Bioethics Advisory Commission, but Congress did not act on such legislation.

Mitchell described Clinton's proposal and another as inadequate, saying the ERLC was opposed because embryos from fertilization were not specifically protected, the prohibition did not include private research and the ban was not indefinite.

He also called for the president to work with multinational organizations to initiate a worldwide ban.

Messengers to the 1997 Southern Baptist Convention meeting adopted a resolution calling on Congress to ban all research on human embryos, as well as the cloning of human beings.

The resolution also urged Congress to push for an international policy to prohibit human cloning worldwide.



SBC statement fourth-ranked news story

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (ABP) — Reporters who cover religion for the secular press named a Southern Baptist Convention declaration that wives should submit to their husbands No. 4 in their ranking of top news stories for 1998.

The 50-member Religion Newswriters Association chose President Bill Clinton and Pope John Paul II as the year's top newsmakers.

Third in the RNA ranking was a United Methodist church jury falling one vote short of convicting Omaha pastor Jimmy Creech of violating church law by performing a same-sex marriage ceremony.

The fourth-ranked story was the addition of a family article to the "Baptist Faith and Message," the official faith statement for the 15.9 million-member Southern Baptist Convention. The article captured widespread attention in national media with its call for wives to "submit graciously" to their husband's "servant leadership."

Amy Grant, Gary Chapman announce separation

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The music of Amy Grant will remain in LifeWay Christian Stores although she and husband Gary Chapman have separated after 16 years of marriage.

LifeWay Christian Stores is an 81-store chain operated by LifeWay Christian Resources (formerly the Sunday School Board) of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"We regret to hear the announcement and we will pray for them, as they have requested," Bruce Munns, LifeWay Christian Stores' vice president for operations, said in a statement released to The Tennessean in Nashville for a Jan. 1 story about the couple's separation.

Roland Lundy, of Word's Myrrh music label, told the newspaper Grant "was originally a Myrrh artist, she's still a Myrrh artist, and she will remain a Myrrh artist." Grant, who

became a leading contemporary Christian music performer during the 1980s, has been with the Myrrh label more than 20 years.

Chapman is a Christian singer-songwriter and host of The Nashville Network show "Prime Time Country." He wrote one of Grant's early hits, "My Father's Eyes."

Grant and Chapman have three children, a son, age 11, and

two daughters, ages 9 and 6.

The two-sentence announcement released Dec. 30 states: "Gary Chapman and Amy Grant regretfully announce

their separation after sixteen years of marriage. They both ask for your prayers during this sad time and hope that you would respect their privacy."

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Appointees to join religious freedom panel

WASHINGTON (BP) — Congressional leaders have appointed four of the nine members of a new panel on religious freedom overseas, including one of the leaders in awakening Americans to the persecution of Christians worldwide.

Outgoing Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich, R.-Ga., named:

- Nina Shea, director of the Washington-based Center for Religious Freedom, and

- Elliott Abrams, a former assistant secretary of State, to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

In the same news release, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R.-Miss., announced his selection of:

- Bill Armstrong, a former U.S. senator from Colorado, and

- John Bolton, a former assistant secretary of State, for the panel.

The president has three appointments to the commission, while the Senate and House minority leaders have one each.

President Clinton and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D.-S.D., are expected to name their selections in January, staff members for both said.

The office of the House minority leader, Rep. Richard Gephardt, D.-Mo., could not be contacted.

The commission was established as a result of the adoption of the International Religious Freedom Act in October.

The enactment of the legislation was the

result of a long and often contentious struggle to adopt a measure intended to alleviate the persecution of religious adherents in foreign countries.

The six-member commission established by the law is to report annually on countries guilty of committing or permitting violations of religious liberty.

The president is required to respond to the report, but he has options ranging from diplomatic protest to economic sanction as measures to use in dealing with offending governments.

While the law is intended to provide freedom for adherents of all religions, it was the sudden awareness nearly three years ago of the widespread nature of the persecution of Christians that provided momentum for such legislation.

Shea has been among those leading the effort to educate American Christians of the plight of their fellow believers.

Her organization has helped reveal incidents of persecution in countries such as China and Egypt.

She also has been a member of the 20-person Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, which is administered by the State Department.

Abrams formerly was assistant secretary of State for Human Rights, as well as for International Organizations.

He held both positions during President Reagan's administration from 1981-89.

He now is president of the Washington-based Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Armstrong is a conservative evangelical

Christian who served two terms in the Senate before returning to private life in 1991.

Bolton, who is a senior vice president at the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute, served in both the Reagan and Bush administrations.

He was an assistant attorney general under Reagan and assistant secretary of State for International Organizations in the Bush administration.

"By these appointments, we serve notice upon those rulers who have on their hands the blood of martyrs: The United States of America has heard the cry of the oppressed and will no longer turn away from their suffering," Gingrich and Lott said in a joint written statement Dec. 22.

It is estimated by some that more followers of Christ have died for their faith in the 20th century than in all the 19 previous centuries combined.

Those cited most frequently as countries where religious persecution persists include China, Vietnam, Iran, Cuba, Pakistan, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Laos, and Burma.

When Clinton signed the International Religious Freedom Act in late October, he said he planned to nominate Robert Seiple to the position of ambassador at large established by the law. He will serve as an ex-officio member of the commission.

Seiple, former head of the Christian relief organization World Vision, was named earlier in the year as special representative for international religious freedom in the Department of State.

Missouri association votes to oust charismatic church

MARSHFIELD, Mo. (ABP) Church in Marshfield, a church which split last year over practices including speaking in

tongues and being slain in the Spirit.

Webster Association voted to withdraw fellowship last fall from the church over its charismatic worship practices, according to a recent report in the Missouri Baptist newspaper.

In March, the Marshfield congregation split over the issue, with 173 members voting to "go praise and worship" and 121 voting to "remain funda-

mental conservative."

The next Sunday, 76 departing members met and later formed Faith Southern Baptist Church, which was accepted into membership of Webster County Association in October and recently began construction of a new building.

Calvary pastor Roger Hicks said his views began to change radically two years ago, when a professor talked about revivals in Shantung, China, in a class he took at Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

He returned home to Marshfield and read a book on historic revivals before concluding those experiences were different from his own. "I was lacking a deeper walk with God," he said.

Hicks said Calvary Baptist intends to continue membership in the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Based on the 'Baptist Faith and Message' and the Bible, I don't see any conflict," he said.

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Organization sending athletes on missions

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — A basketball in the hands of Michael Jordan immediately transforms into something else, becoming almost like a quill dipped in the poet's ink. In the same way, a basketball in the hands of a missionary in a foreign country can become a powerful instrument for sharing the Gospel.

That's because in some places around the world, a basketball can take the Gospel where a Bible cannot. While no one would argue that it is God's Word that opens the door to a personal relationship with Christ, the tool of an athlete's trade can often be used to communicate God's love.

"In many countries, it is illegal to carry a Bible. Nowhere is it illegal to carry a basketball," explained Cheryl Wolfinger, who has been

president of the International Sports Federation since (ISF) its founding in 1993.

Working with Southern Baptist missionaries under the auspices of the Richmond, Va.-based International Mission Board (IMB), the ISF helps plan, recruit, and coordinate sports evangelism missions trips.

That first year, ISF took three teams to work with missionaries abroad. This past summer, more than 40 projects shared the Gospel with about 6,000 citizens of foreign countries.

"I am overwhelmed daily at how much has been done," Wolfinger admitted, speaking of the blessing she's received of having her divinely inspired idea turn into a thriving, fruitful ministry.

Those involved with ISF raise their own money, often thousands of dollars, to participate in a summer project. Recruits learn about the program through an ISF newsletter sent to Fellowship of Christian Athletes groups on college campuses or through requests made to the IMB.

After a two- to three-day training session in Dallas, during which ISF attempts

to "close out their American way of thinking," said Wolfinger, they are sent out to the field, or the court, or the diamond. "We've had people from all sports — boxing, swimming, softball — you name it," she added.

The team members, who are usually complete strangers before their training session, put on clinics, compete against local or national competition, and travel to schools or parks to put themselves in a position to witness.

Through the clinics especially, many one-on-one opportunities arise for the athletes to share their faith.

One doesn't have to be on scholarship at a major college to participate. "We had one girl go with us who hadn't played much basketball before," Wolfinger remembered.

Yet instead of idly sitting on the bench during games, she would draw her own crowd on the sidelines teaching children songs like "Jesus Loves Me."

More information about the ISF can be obtained from the International Mission Board at (800) 999-3113, ext. 1512.



God 'had a better plan' for Arkansas head coach

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (BP) — Houston Nutt's sports goals as a youngster didn't revolve around becoming head coach of the Arkansas Razorbacks. From the time he was 10 years old, his dream was to be a professional football player, basketball player — or both.

As an All-America high school athlete at Little Rock Central and a two-sport college player at both Arkansas and Oklahoma State, his goals appeared to be on track — but God had other ideas.

"The saddest day of my life was the ESPN draft day in 1981 when my name wasn't called" to play in the NFL, Nutt reflected. "That was so hard for me. I couldn't believe that for the first time in my life I wasn't going to do what I set out to do."

"I knew I was going to be a coach one day. My father was a coach, but I wanted to go play in the NFL first and I kinda had a deal worked out: 'I tell you what, God, I'm going to be a great witness for you in the NFL,' but it didn't happen."

Looking back, Nutt acknowledged, God "didn't see things quite that way. He had a better plan. It's amazing that if you truly trust God, he has a plan for you and he knew it all along."

Nutt's family values can be traced to the influence of his parents, whom he describes as "solid Christians." Noting he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior at age 11, Nutt has been active in church wherever he has lived.

Nutt often has one-on-one opportunities to visit with players who acknowledge they are missing something in their lives.

"I don't press it on anybody," Nutt said, "but if they want to talk, I've said, 'You're missing one thing. You've had it all. Everybody looks at you

like you don't have a problem in the world, but what you really don't have is something that's everlasting, something that's going to stay with you for eternity. It's a relationship and a walk with Jesus Christ — a person that died for you, and all he wants you to do is acknowledge him and ask him and he wants to come into your heart today. It's that simple. I'm not saying your life is going to be rosy from this period on, but I tell you what, it's going to be a whole lot easier."

Noting the majority of student athletes today come from single-parent homes, Nutt pointed out that for many of his players, "I'm the first male authority over their life. That, to me, is why I know God wanted me in the profession of coaching."

That influence was obvious late in the season when Nutt suspended star kicker Todd Latourette for one game after he was charged with drunk driving. Although Nutt faced pressure to allow Latourette to play in a crucial game against Mississippi State, he explained, "I said, 'Guys, I can't do it. We've been talking about truth. We've been talking about doing what's right. We can't just sweep it under the carpet for this game.'"

How does Nutt balance the responsibilities of coaching, church involvement and family life? "The biggest thing going for me," he responded, "is I have the best wife. I have Diana. To me, she is the wife of the year. She keeps the real balance. ... No question about it, she's the MVP."

As he looks to the future, Nutt said, "The biggest reward for me is 15 years from now when players come back and say, 'Hey, Coach, thanks a lot. I saw the way you treated your son. I saw a Christian father talk with his wife. You made a differ-

ence in my life by being with me for four years. I'm a better father because of it. I'm a better businessman.' That, to me, is what

it's all about. That's the key.

"There's no greater feeling than touching somebody's life. It's better than a touchdown."

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(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

I am a 12-year-old Christian, and I am concerned that my parents curse a lot — especially when they're angry. How can I get them to stop?

My kids (ages 8, 7, and 4) got everything under the sun for Christmas, but they are already fussing and fighting with each other again. Help!

Cursing is a bad habit frequently learned early in life, and later on can be very difficult to stop. Cursing is often used to inappropriately express an intense emotion when the curser is unable to give the emotion a proper name. When you have a quiet moment with each parent (riding in a car or folding clothes, for example), express your honest feelings by saying something like, "Your cursing really disturbs (scares, confuses, hurts) me, and I don't understand why you have to do it. Is there something I can do to help you stop?" Don't expect immediate results. You'll probably have to repeat your concerns many times, but at least they will have heard you. Breaking this bad habit will be harder for them than you know. Pray for your parents, and encourage them to do better. That is the value of a strong Christian family — helping each other become more like Christ in all we do.

It sounds as if you have three normal children learning to take charge of their worlds — and manipulate yours. They are in the early stages of socialization, and fussing/fighting is common at this point. As hard as it is on you, be thankful they are assertive enough to let their voices be heard! If there's no blood (so to speak), leave them alone to work things out among themselves. If the situation is not resolved within about 20 minutes, however, you can intervene with the comment, "It seems things aren't going the way you want. Are there some other ways to get what you want?" Guide them in coming up with appropriate solutions. Help your children develop problem-solving skills without always "fixing" everything for them. All the energy required to do this may leave parents feeling a little crazy, but learning those social skills will serve your children well for a lifetime. The earlier they are encouraged to learn this process, the better.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Promote Kingdom life

Matt. 18:1-10, 19:13-15

By Carl M. White

There has been an invasion, Earth is invaded territory, and Christ is the invader. Like the GIs of WWII whose objective was the liberation of Europe, Jesus' objective is the liberation of human lives from sin. In coming, he establishes a new kingdom, or a new rule of life. It is called the Kingdom of Heaven. This new kingdom has a new set of rules or principles to guide it. Matthew's Gospel shows us a few of these.

There is a kingdom attitude (18:1-4). In this new kingdom, the attitude toward greatness is reversed from that of the old kingdom. In the old rule, power, position, good parent-

age or good looks is necessary to advance. Not so in the new kingdom. The greatest will be the ones with child-like humility.

Not only is this attitude important in the kingdom, it is necessary for entrance into the kingdom. Jesus warns that unless we become child-like in faith, we will not enter the kingdom. By this he does not mean a child-like mentality. God does not want us to be ignorant. He wants us to think and to gain new and richer insights into human life. Rather, Jesus is referring to a child's ability to trust with total abandonment. Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven



White

requires abandonment of all other efforts, casting oneself totally on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. This kind of faith has a child-like simplicity, rather than an adult-like complexity. Anyone can have it.

There is a kingdom acceptance (18:5). Verse five is an intriguing statement. There is a relationship between knowing Christ and accepting children. In this instance, however, the reference goes beyond just children to include those child-like, or the small and the weak. By this the Gospel is not saying that helping the small and weak is necessary for salvation. This kind of "works salvation" is thoroughly repudiated by Scripture. Rather, it speaks of the result of a relationship with Christ. When we are with Jesus, and he is in us, his attitude becomes our attitude. He accepts the innocent and

powerless, and so should we.

There is a warning (18:6-10). This attitude of acceptance is followed by a stern warning. If accepting a child is evidence of acceptance in the kingdom, then causing a child to fall is evidence of being outside of the kingdom. From this insight, the Lord addresses being a stumbling block.

"Woe to you," he says, indicating the severity of the warning. Someone or something that is in danger of causing a person to stumble is to be taken seriously and dealt with dramatically. If your hand, foot, or eye cause you to stumble, cut it off, Jesus says.

This warning ends with an interesting statement. The angel of a little one is in heaven constantly "before the face of my Father." While some think this is a reference to guardian angels, most Bible scholars think that this means children always have the Father's attention.

Finally, there is a concern (19:13-15). Given the above values of the new kingdom, the final one is logical. God wants us to bring the children — the small and weak, those of child-like faith — to him through Jesus Christ. This is to be a concern of ours.

I wonder, what would happen to a community if a church were to decide to reach every eight year old child in that community, and stay with that child until he or she is grown? Do you think it would make a difference? Would it affect families and homes? Would it affect the crime rate? Would it affect abortion and teenage pregnancy? What difference would it make?

There is a new kingdom coming, and it is already at work. In this kingdom, children — the small and the weak — are important. This should be our concern.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

LIFE AND WORK

Moving beyond abortion

John 8:1-11; James 5:16, 19-20

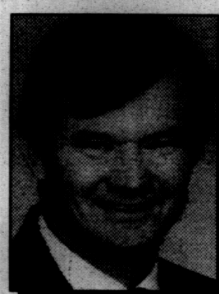
By Hugh Plunkett

Abortion is one of the most hotly debated issues in America. Beyond the debates is the question of how Christians can relate redemptively to people who have been involved in abortions. Some Christian women who have experienced abortions suffer in silence and wrestle with guilt. At times an abortion becomes a wedge between a husband and wife. In these cases, such people often do not find help from the Christian community. The Bible offers us principles about how to develop a ministry of restoration to help people who have been involved in abortion.

A sign of just how far America has strayed from bibli-

cal teachings is that society is more concerned about the eggs of sea turtles than the life of an unborn child. Pro-life and Pro-abortion forces have battled for years. As tragic as this conflict is, it pales in comparison to the suffering of those who have experienced an abortion. It affects both the mother and the father, sometimes for the rest of their lives. As Christians we need to understand that Jesus offers God's forgiveness and restoration, not condemnation, to those who have broken God's laws.

View people as persons, not as objects (John 8:1-6a). The Pharisees treated the woman caught in adultery as a



Plunkett

tool to entrap Jesus. He would have nothing to do with their treating her as merely an object. This scripture gives us some idea of how Jesus views people, including those caught in abortion's cruel web. Believers are to view people as persons of worth, not objects to be used or rejected.

Avoid judgmental attitudes (John 8:6b-9). The Pharisees were quick to condemn the woman. Jesus refused to join them in their condemnation, instead reminding them that all are guilty of sin. Have you ever noticed that the ones who are most judgmental are seldom without fault themselves? They are blind to their own unrighteousness. Jesus warns us of this when he asks, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matt. 7:3) Recognizing our

own sinfulness will help us avoid passing judgment on or condemning others.

Extend forgiveness (John 8:10-11). Jesus did not condemn the woman. Instead, he encouraged her to repent and to live a godly life. Isn't it odd that everyone condemned the woman but Jesus? The Pharisees condemned her out of convenience and congratulated themselves on the well-laid trap they had contrived for Jesus. The woman condemned herself by her silence. Jesus was the only one who was qualified to pronounce condemnation and yet he did not, instead extending forgiveness and encouragement. Believers are to follow Jesus' example.

Support with prayer (James 5:16). Prayer and mutual confession can lead to the healing of many personal crises. Prayers of people who are right with God are effective. We are to pray earnestly for those who have sinned so they can experience

wholeness. A heartfelt, sincere prayer can work more wonders than a thousand words of condemnation and scorn.

Be a change agent (James 5:19-20). One whom God uses to lead sinners away from wrong paths and sets them on right paths can help them avoid some of the terrible consequences of sin. I am convinced of the truth of the observation, "Christians shoot their wound." So many times we see friends and loved ones living in sin and we shun them, talk about them, and basically forget about them. We say, "Until he changes and repents, I will have nothing to do with him." I'm so glad that Jesus does not feel this way. He didn't wait for me to clean up my act. He died for me while I was still a sinner. He loved me that much! He forgave me that much! As a follower of Jesus Christ, I can do no less for my fellow man.

Plunkett is minister of music and adults at Clarksdale Church.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Jesus cares — Sanctity of life

Mark 5:21-43; 7:24-37

By Dee McDermitt

This Sunday has been marked to celebrate the sanctity of human life. Let's look at some scriptures to see how the creator of life ignores boundaries and casts aside traditions to show his compassionate concern for the lives of human beings. If we call ourselves children and ambassadors of this God who deems our lives so precious, we are obligated to discover what he values so that we can value the same things. What does he value? He places a high value on human life.

Jesus cares for physical health (5:25-29). Jesus had returned by boat from the

region of the Gerasenes. When he reached shore a large crowd gathered, among whom was Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. He pleaded with Jesus to come with him to heal his dying daughter. In the process of going, the crowd followed and pressed around Jesus. In the crowd was a woman who had suffered for years from continuous bleeding. She was at the end of her rope because she had tried many doctors and spent much money. When she heard Jesus was in town, the end of her rope became the beginning of her hope. She believed if she could only touch



McDermitt

his clothing, she would be healed. According to Jewish law (Lev. 15: 25-30) she was ceremonially unclean because of the bleeding. She defiled all she touched, so she was taking a risk by being among the crowd. That didn't matter to God. He saw her in her desperate state. Her life and health were more precious than laws. Healing power went out of Jesus the moment she touched his clothing.

Jesus cares for life (5:40-42). While Jesus talked with the healed woman, a servant came with the news that Jairus' daughter was dead. He reassured Jairus and when they came to the house, he sent the mourners out and took only Jairus, the mother and the disciples into the room with the dead girl. He took her hand and told her to get up. Again, Jesus is not afraid of defilement from

touching the dead. His purity overrides any impurity. Life is precious and he is stronger than death. He shows his loving concern by telling them to get her something to eat.

Jesus cares for spiritual health (7:26-30). In this passage, Jesus went to the territory of Phoenicia, possibly for a time of rest. He didn't remain incognito for long; when people discovered he was in an area, they came. The woman in this passage was a Greek (Gentile) whose daughter was demon-possessed. She begged Jesus for healing for her child. Jesus' answer to her may seem unkind or puzzling, but it shows that he is conscious that his mission was to the Jews and not to the Gentiles at that time. Also he may have been testing her faith. I like to think that Jesus' tone of voice was not discouraging, but that he may have had a twinkle in his eye. Her answer showed that she accepted her position as

an "outsider", but she was not giving up. Jesus saw the depth of her faith and told her the demon was gone. Life and spiritual health was precious to God. His bounty was rich enough for even outsiders to share.

Jesus cares for wholeness (7:34-35). Imagine the quality of life of one who is unable to hear or speak. A man with these disabilities was brought to Jesus. This time when Jesus healed, he used a more tactile approach by putting his fingers in the man's ears, and spitting and touching his tongue. Jesus' actions in the healing process were things that even a deaf-mute could understand. What great compassion Jesus had for this man's personal situation. He cares the same today for us, whatever our situation. How precious life is to him. He came so that we could have it abundantly.

McDermitt is a member of Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg.

Y2K discussion heats up for countdown

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — From Jerry Falwell to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to The New York Times and USA Today, discussion of the "Y2K" potential computer crisis is heating up.

Among recent media reports and other developments concerning possible computer disruptions that may affect the nation and the world at the end of this year:

- Falwell, in "The Falwell Fax" he distributes weekly, noted in his Nov. 20 edition: "I continue to believe, based on personal conversations with influential economic, banking and computer experts, that our nation will face minimal Y2K problems come January 1, 2000."

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in a Jan. 6 news release, said its officials "are urging the emergency management, fire and emergency services, communities, and the public to get ready now for Y2K."

"It is very important that counties, municipalities, school districts and other organizations that have not yet begun to work on Y2K issues, start now," FEMA deputy director Mike Walker said. "While some failures will be minor annoyances, some may have more serious consequences."

A recent FEMA survey of state emergency management directors concerning Y2K issues at the state and local levels, according to the news release, found that "although Y2K fixes are well under way in state-level emergency preparedness offices, the emergency service systems of many counties and municipalities remain untested."

"Generally, states and the larger local governments are aware of and making some progress toward resolving Y2K issues," Walker said, "however, many smaller local governments as well as some state and territorial governments seem not to be aware of the problem. Clearly the most serious potential for problems is at the local level, and this is what we are concerned about."

In February and March, FEMA will conduct "Y2K Consequence Management" workshops around the country to identify critical issues, assess vulnerabilities, review contingency plans and consider policies and decisions that need to be taken to deal with possible Y2K consequences. Participants will include state Y2K emer-

gency coordinators, emergency managers and state fire marshals.

The FEMA news release stated, "Many states also reported that they have not developed contingency plans specifically for Y2K problems; instead they plan to address problems under existing emergency plans or they expect to have their systems Y2K compliant in time. Most states expressed some level of concern over the possibility of power failures, especially where power is provided by smaller utilities. Other areas of concern cited by the states include limited or lack of resources to assess, test, and validate systems and fixes for Y2K problems."

- The New York Times and USA Today carried front-page stories on Y2K, Dec. 27 in The Times and Dec. 31 in USA Today.

The Federal Reserve has announced it will print an extra \$50 billion in currency for the end of 1999, The Times reported, as have other media. Toward the end of the year "the retail public is going to panic and want cash, and we better have it for them," David Iacino, head of BankBoston's year 2000 program, was quoted as saying.

USA Today, meanwhile, reported 34% of Americans expect "major problems" in 2000 — down from 45% in June — according to polling the newspaper had undertaken with the National Science Foundation, with 61% saying they expect no problems or only minor problems. Among other findings: 26% of those surveyed said they intend to stockpile food, 31% intend to set aside a large amount of cash; and half said they will not fly on or around Jan. 1, 2000. The most recent polling, of 1,032 adults from Dec. 9-13, has a margin of error of 3%, USA Today said.

An American Red Cross poll in 1997 found only one in seven Americans describing themselves as "very prepared" for a disaster; 83% said they keep essential supplies in various places around their home, greatly reducing their accessibility in an emergency, while 31% did not know when to turn off electrical power and other utilities in case of emergency.

Various media, meanwhile, have carried reports that Social Security and Internal Revenue Service payment systems are Y2K-ready. A USA Today story on Dec. 28, meanwhile, reported that the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense and State Department were

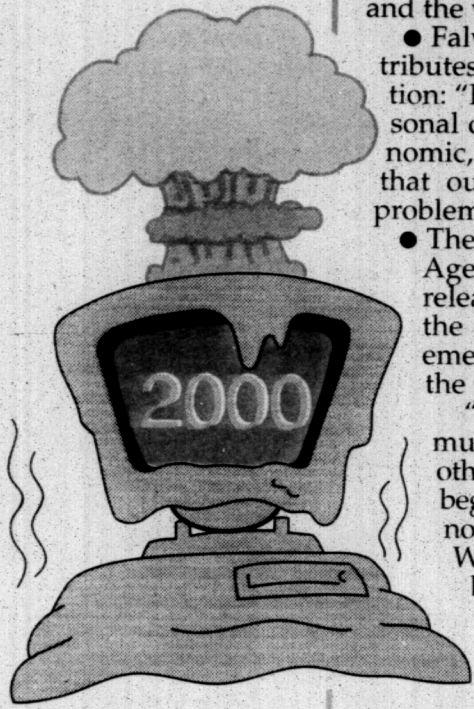
among the federal agencies "lagging farthest behind" in Y2K computer fixes, while the Small Business Administration and Department of Veteran Affairs were described as in "good shape."

- InterVarsity Christian Fellowship has postponed its highly attended Urbana missions conference for college students for a year, from Dec. 27-31, 1999, to the same dates in the year 2000. The conference traditionally has been held every three years, drawing about 20,000 students and others. According to a report in Religion News Service, "Ministry officials cited several reasons, including 'many unknown variables' concerning the Y2K computer glitch and the decision by the person coordinating travel to the event to pull out of her contract because she couldn't assure quality service."

- The Assemblies of God General Council's board of administration adopted a statement Oct. 14 noting, "The leadership of the Assemblies of God cautions the body of Christ to use wisdom in the matters related to the Y2K problem. Needless fear and alarmist tactics over the Y2K issue and the approaching turn of the millennium are directly in conflict with the teaching of our Lord Himself" The board then cited Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25-34, which begin, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear" and later exhort, "But seek first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well."

The Assemblies of God board further stated, "... we encourage our people to not engage in activities such as hoarding food, withdrawing money from banks, believing doomsday scenarios, or expecting the economic, political, and social collapse of western civilization when the clock strikes January 1, 2000."

"Instead the body of Christ should place its focus upon sharing our faith with those whose hearts are fearful about the future. In these hours when the world is filled with uncertainty, we have the message of hope from our Lord who has taught us to 'Fear not.' Rather than fearing the collapse of computers or society, the Scriptures call upon us to fear God's wrath. The good news is that God's wrath need never be experienced when we place our trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord."



Bibliocipher

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GBUJB KQ MKP
JKCRUCJVHB AV KQ LUC?
YCX UQ U LYM HBV
HNPHB, GBM XK MV CKH
OVDUVRV AV?
ZKBC VUWBH:
QKNHM-LUS

Clue: J = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Colossians Four: Six.

Y2K brochure distributed by American Red Cross

WASHINGTON (BP) — The American Red Cross, in its disaster preparedness role, has issued a brochure on the "Y2K" computer disruptions that may occur as the year 2000 arrives.

Available from local American Red Cross chapters, the brochure does not sound an alarmist tone, but it gives an overview of possible Y2K problems that may arise across the country and lists 11 areas of preparedness that individuals and families can take.

"Because no one can be certain about the effects of the Y2K problem, the American Red Cross has developed the following checklist for you," the brochure states. "These are some easy steps you can take to prepare for possible disruptions. All of these recommendations make good sense, regardless of the potential problem."

Such steps are important for

readiness for disasters such as a tornado or hurricane, a Red Cross spokesman told Baptist Press Jan. 7.

Possible areas of disruption, according to information the American Red Cross brochure relays from White House and Senate studies, involve utilities and the national power grid; banking and finance; health care; transportation; telecommunications; pensions and mutual funds; emergency planning; and general business.

Among the American Red Cross' 11 suggestions:

- ◆ "Check with manufacturers of any essential computer-controlled electronic equipment in your home to see if that equipment may be affected."

- ◆ "Stock disaster supplies to last several days to a week for yourself and those who live with you. The Red Cross doesn't recommend hoarding supplies. ..."

- ◆ "Have some extra cash on hand. Plan to fill your automobile gas tank a day or so before 12/31/99."

- ◆ "Have extra blankets, coats, hats, and gloves to keep warm."

- ◆ "Have plenty of flashlights and extra batteries on hand. Don't use candles for emergency lighting."

- ◆ "Be prepared to relocate to a shelter for warmth and protection during a prolonged power outage."

- ◆ "Check with the emergency services providers in your community to see if there is more information available about how your community is preparing for any potential problems."

More extensive Y2K precautions are found in other resources, such as the books, "Y2K: The Millennium Bug — A Balanced Christian

Response" by Shaunti Feldhahn, published by Multnomah Publishers, and "Y2K: How to Survive the Coming Chaos" by Michael Hyatt, published by Thomas Nelson, and the Internet site of The Cassandra Project nonprofit organization: cassandraproject.org/home.html.

The books by Feldhahn and Hyatt also encourage Christians to use the Y2K disruptions as opportunities for witness and ministry to non-Christians who need help as they face the turn-of-the-century uncertainties and any crises that may arise.

Such encouragement also is an integral part of Y2K sections of the Internet sites of the Christian Broadcasting Network: www.cbn.org/y2k/index.asp, and of well-known Christian financial expert Larry Burkett: cfcmistry.org.